

Judicial Branch Budget Request FY 2008 –2009

Fact Sheet

- For FY 2006-2007, the Judicial Branch submitted a budget that held services to the FY 2005 level. That amount was less than the “maintenance” level allowed by statute (RSA 9:4) to cover population increases, economic conditions and other factors. While we made no request for new initiatives or additional personnel, we did submit a list of Judicial Branch needs, in priority, and their cost. Our budget, at the FY 2005 level, was passed through the Governor’s office and approved by the legislature, without change.
- In FY 2007, the Judicial Branch operating budget represented only 1.3 % of the total state operating budget.
- For FY 2008-2009, the Judicial Branch has submitted a request that includes both a “maintenance” and a “change” budget:

	<u>MAINTENANCE BUDGET</u>	<u>BUDGET REQUEST</u>
FY 2007	\$65.3M	
FY 2008	\$68.5M	\$71.9M
FY 2009	\$69.8M	\$74.5M

- After extensive review of court system operations, and identification of needed improvement in service to the public, the Judicial Branch requests an appropriation of \$71.9 million in FY 2008 and \$74.5 million in FY 2009. This “change” budget includes \$8.1 million in initiatives over the biennium developed through a long-term strategic planning process involving judges, staff, lawyers and a Citizens Commission on the state courts. See the Judicial Branch Strategic Plan at www.courts.state.nh.us
- Security is budgeted as a maintenance (no change) item for FY 08-09. The Supreme Court is supporting the County Sheriffs' proposed legislation to provide security in all New Hampshire courts. Generally, the Administrative Office of the Courts provides Security Officers to District, Family and to two Probate Court locations. The county sheriffs primarily staff the 11 Superior Court locations, and provide prisoner transport to all court locations.

- Salaries and benefits represent 75 percent of the budget request, which is consistent with previous budgets.
- Benefits for non-judicial employees are calculated as 48.3% of salaries.
- Benefits for full-time judges are calculated as 37.5 % of salaries.
- According to the 2006 National Center for State Courts publication "Examining the Work of the State Courts, 2005," the backlog of pending cases in all major case types in New Hampshire has been increasing for several years. SEE Powerpoint, pp. 5,6. at www.courts.state.nh.us.

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